

Department de Filologia Anglesa i de Germanística

PhD Winter Workshop
PhD Program in English Studies

Friday, February 7, 2020

ABSTRACTS



Source: <https://www.einsteinfoundation.de/en/programmes/einstein-research-project/e:>

FORMAT of WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS 2020

According to the year of your enrollment in the PhD program you will be expected to undertake the tasks indicated in each case.

First year students

- Main task: To present your *PhD research proposal* in 20 minutes + 10 minutes for questions from audience.
- The presentation should provide: (a) a clear explanation of the topic, (b) the provisional or definitive research questions explaining how these questions intend to contribute new knowledge to the field; (c) theoretical approach (d) methods and data you intend to collect and analyze.

Second year students

- Main task: To present *a key aspect* of your PhD research in the format of a conference paper in 20 minutes + 10 minutes for questions from audience.
- This presentation should include (a) an explanation of the key aspect/s of your choice and how it fits into the wider context of your thesis, (b) state of the question on the aspect you present and how what you are investigating constitutes an advance in knowledge, (c) a short description of data and methods, (d) a provisional or definitive analysis of the data, (e) conclusions.

Third year students

- Main task: To present your dissertation in 5 minutes with 10 minutes for questions from audience.
- This presentation should explain in an illustrative way the topic, the research questions, and provisional or definitive findings with examples and conclusions in 5 minutes. (****NOTE METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK SHOULD BE EXCLUDED)

4th year students and beyond

- Main task: To present in 20 minutes + 10 minutes for questions findings, original contribution and provisional or definitive conclusions
- This presentation should explain (a) the topic and research questions very briefly, (b) a focus on findings, (c) a focus also on conclusions of the thesis and the contribution it makes

LANGUAGE

GUEST SPEAKER

Negative Preposing and its Status as a Main Clause Phenomenon in English and Spanish

Ángel Jiménez - Fernández
Universidad de Sevilla

This talk deals with Root Transformations such as Negative Preposing in English and Spanish. I claim that RTs may in principle be compatible with all types of embedded clauses regardless of whether the selecting predicate is factive/non-asserted or non-factive/asserted. Languages differ in how freely they allow RTs in various types of complements. Adopting an intervention account, according to which an operator moving to Spec-CP intervenes with other types of movement, including RTs, I account for the variation in the distribution English/Spanish Negative Preposing by the options made possible by feature inheritance of discourse features. It is well known that RTs in English are highly limited in distribution, while the same operations in Spanish are possible in many more constructions than in English.

In Spanish, discourse features may be inherited from C(omplementizer) to T(ense), so that Negative Preposing targets Spec-TP, and hence no intervention effect arises. In contrast, discourse features stay at C in English, so that Negative Preposing competes with the operator movement to CP for the target position, and gives rise to intervention. This hypothesis is explored and validated through an experiment with informants of both languages.

In addition, relative clauses are also taken into account in order to see whether Negative Preposing is allowed or not in the two languages. A second experiment has been conducted which justifies the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive relatives in English with respect to the phenomenon under study, whereas no such distinction arises in Spanish. This patterns with my previous findings and supports my original claim that preposed negative constituents target different syntactic positions in the two languages.

Title: Analysing the Impact of Intergenerational Attrition: English-Catalan Bilinguals

Author: Àngel Barranqueras Martínez

Format: 1st year student

Supervisor: M. Capdevila & E. Pladevall

Abstract:

Montrul (2016) defines heritage speakers (HS) as individuals who grew up in a bilingual environment where a majority and a heritage language are spoken. HS are an interesting source of linguistic data due to the conditions in which their bilingual development unfolds. In fact, “HS present a unique test-bed for issues of acquisition, maintenance and transfer within linguistic theory” (Scontras et al., 2015: 3). This study seeks to explore (1) the effect of parental input on the bilingual development of English-Catalan children living in an anglophone context, (2) their parents’ L1 (i.e. Catalan) attrition, and (3) the differences between HS’ language features and those of peers in the home country. The Bilingual Language Exposure Calculator (Unsworth, 2013) will be used to elicit data on the amount of input and output that a child is exposed to/produces during their lifespan. By means of controlled and free speech elicitation techniques, morphosyntactic, phonological and lexical features vulnerable to attrition will be investigated in HS (English and Catalan), their parents (Catalan) and the home country peers (English or Catalan). Morphosyntax will be investigated by means of film retelling task, the lexicon will be tested using a picture naming task and a foreign accent rating task will elicit data on bilingual phonology. A C-test will also be administered in order to assess the children’s proficiency in both languages and of their parents in Catalan. Correlations between quantity and quality input and the output scores of these tasks as well as comparisons between heritage children’s linguistic features and their home country peers will be done in order to address the main aim of the present study.

Title: The Acquisition of English Consonant Clusters by Kurdish EFL Learners

Author: Dilgash Mohammed Shareef Alsilevani

Format: 1st year student

Supervisor: J. Cebrián

Abstract:

Acquiring the phonological system of a second language (L2) is a challenge for adult L2 learners. Nevertheless, as a result of adequate input and formal pronunciation instruction, L2 learners may develop a more target-like L2 system (Flege, 1995). This thesis aims to study the acquisition of English onset and coda clusters by Kurdish EFL learners and to explore the role of formal instruction and experience. Kurdish consonant clusters consist of maximally two consonants, whereas English syllable structure is more complex, i.e., (CCC)V(CCCC), which poses a problem to Kurdish EFL learners. By contrast, Kurdish has a greater number of possible consonant combinations, including some that violate the sonority principle. However, the status of some of these sequences has not been settled (e.g. Shokri, 2002; Hasan, 2009) and Kurdish speakers have been reported to insert epenthetic vowels in English s+C clusters (e.g. Keshavarz, 2017; Omer and Hamad, 2016). This study will test the tenets of the Structural Conformity Hypothesis (Eckman 1991) and the Speech Learning Model (Flege 1995). The first model predicts that those elements that are more marked will be more difficult to acquire while the SLM highlights the role of L2 experience in L2 learning. Thus, this thesis will evaluate the production and perception of English onsets and codas by three different groups of Kurdish EFL learners differing in amount of L2 experience and formal instruction. This study will also contribute to the literature on Kurdish phonology, as a second aim of the study is to explore the perception and production of these clusters in L1 Kurdish.

References

- Eckman, F. (1991). The Structural Conformity Hypothesis and the Acquisition of Consonant Clusters in the Interlanguage of ESL Learners. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. (13). 23-41. Doi:10.1017/S0272263100009700
- Flege, J. (1995). Second language speech learning: Theory, findings and problems. In W. Strange (Ed.), *Speech perception and linguistic experience: Issues in cross-language research* (pp.229-273). Timonium, MD: York Press.
- Hasan, A. M. (2009). Consonant clusters in Kurdish. *Duhok University Journal*, (1), 1-8.
- Keshavarz, M.H (2017). Syllabification of final consonant clusters: A salient pronunciation problem of Kurdish EFL learners. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 5(2), 1-14.
- Omer, J.A. & Hamad, Sh, H (2016). Kurdish EFL learners' strategies to break apart the different L2 onset consonant clusters. *Raparin University Journal*, 3 (7), 187-196.
- Shokri, N. (2002). Syllable structure and stress in Bahdini Kurdish. *STUF-Language Typology and Universals*, 55(1), 80-97. Doi:10.1524/stuf.2002.55.1.80

Title: Assessing Students' Content-Specific Language Learning Outcomes in Two EMI Programs in Mainland China

Author: Menghia Zhang

Format: 2nd year student

Supervisor: E. Pladevall

Abstract:

EMI (English-medium instruction) practices in mainland China are still emerging and in need of further empirical investigation, in comparison to European countries (Galloway, Kriukow & Numajiri, 2017; Hu & Lei, 2014; Hu, Li & Lei, 2014; Jiang, Zhang & May, 2016). Particularly, there is a remarkable lack of studies assessing students' language and content learning outcomes through objective tests. (Macaro et al., 2018) This study is part of a larger project which investigates the effectiveness, perceptions, EMI and FL motivation of EMI practices in three non-linguistic disciplines in three Chinese universities. The paper specifically reports on language learning outcomes data from Film Production and International Trade EMI programs. Pre-post content-specific vocabulary and writing tests as well as pre-post grammar proficiency tests were conducted over the course of one semester. Results show that almost no progress was made as regards their general English grammar proficiency, as expected, and very modest gains were found in relation to writing, although the greater gains in writing were observed in the use of content-specific vocabulary and particularly in the International Trade group. As for productive and receptive vocabulary tests, the Film Production group almost made no progress whereas the International Trade group did make significant progress, especially in the receptive vocabulary test. Results are discussed in relation to classroom teaching practices in the two groups, which were observed three times over the course of the semester. Implications for language and content integration in EMI programs are also discussed.

References

- Galloway, N. Kriukow, J. and Numajiri, T. (2017). Higher education and the growing demand for English: an investigation into the English medium of instruction (EMI) movement in China and Japan. *ELT Research Papers*, www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications.
- Hu, G. & Lei, J. (2014). English-medium instruction in Chinese higher education: A case study. *Higher Education* 67/5: 551–567. Available online at: <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-013-9661-5>.
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- Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching*, 51(1), 36-76.

Title: The Cross-linguistic Influence of L1 Farsi and L3 Spanish on Iranian Learners' L2 English Tense and Aspect

Author: Sahar Haghani

Format: 2nd year student

Supervisor: E. Pladevall & S. Tubau

Abstract:

This talk will present the main aims, the background and the design of a potentially suitable task for a study on cross-linguistic influence of L1 Farsi and L3 Spanish on L2 English tense and aspect, specifically the acquisition of present simple and present continuous in Iranian adult speakers. Firstly, a general outline of tense and aspect will be provided; secondly an in depth study of the English simple present tense and aspect is going to be presented and contrasted with the Spanish and Farsi present tense and aspect systems, followed by potential sources for errors. Thirdly, a closed- fixed response interview with Iranian immigrants is going to be described with an aim to test whether knowledge of first or third language may adversely affect the grammatical representation of time in the learners' L2.

Title: Null and Overt Subjects by Heritage Speakers of English: Bilingual Immersion vs Foreign Language Instruction Contexts

Author: Andrea Huerta

Format: 3rd year student (15 min.)

Supervisor: E. Pladevall & S. Tubau

Abstract:

Heritage speakers are early bilinguals who are exposed to the heritage language (L1) and the community language (L2) (Benmamoun, Montrul and Polinsky, 2013) and share properties of both L1 and L2 speakers (Montrul, 2016). The present study explores the role that different types of instruction might have on the acquisition of English by heritage speakers of English in Catalonia. More specifically, through different experimental tasks – a grammaticality judgment task, a comprehension task and a production task –, this project analyzes the effects that the type of instruction and school input (immersion vs. EFL instruction) and the age of the participants may have on their production and interpretation of null and overt subjects and how these differ from English monolingual children. Potential findings will contribute to filling an important gap in the area of SLA by establishing how heritage speakers of English in Catalonia acquire English in two different instruction contexts that necessarily constrain the amount and quality of input received.

Title: The Logic of English Skills in Recruitment

Author: Hanna Klimava

Format: 4th year student

Supervisor: M. Moyer

Abstract:

This thesis is an enquiry into practices of recruitment agencies that find workers for businesses in Barcelona, Spain. Language skills represent one of the main requisites in contemporary hiring, which is both an outcome of the economy organization, and a feature of

the labour market with rather high unemployment figures. Looking at how language partakes in selection of candidates for job openings helps us define the role of language in jobs allocation. Thus, English skills are commonly used as a mechanic tool to sift through candidate pools and refine searches. Also, while the requirement for English is not always straightforward, it skews the outcome of a selection process towards more proficient candidates. Furthermore, English skills levels requested by clients, which become an obligation for candidate searches, do not match the actual usage of the language on the job, and hence they are contested by recruiters. The logic of recruitment has it that English drives up the value of highly language-wise skilful profiles. In contrast, it adds an extra layer of insecurity for weaker candidates who happen to face labour risks.

The contribution of this study is to a largely explored area of sociolinguistics that delves into language issues in work contexts (Angouri, 2018, Flubacher, M., Coray, R., Duchêne A, 2018, Kraft, 2017, Pajaro, 2018, Holborow, 2018). Focus on how language skills play out in an earlier overlooked pre-work setting in Spain yet opens up a perspective on power of a mere language requisite and practices associated with it to foster unequal and highly problematic access to jobs.

References

- Angouri, Jo (2018). Culture, Discourse, and the Workplace. Routledge.
- Flubacher, M., Coray R., Duchêne A. (2018). Language, Investment and Employability. The Uneven Distribution of Resources in the Public Employment Service. Palgrave 2018.
- Holborow, M. (2018) Language skills as human capital? Challenging the neoliberal frame, *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 18:5, 520-532, DOI: 10.1080/14708477.2018.1501846
- Kraft, Kamila (2017). Constructing Migrant Workers. Multilingualism and Communication in the transitional construction site. PhD Dissertation. Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies. Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo.
- Pájaro, V. (2018). Who Gets to Pass? Performances of Professional Selves and Language Competences in Job Interviews in Multilingual Norway. PhD thesis

Title: The Communicative Process of Empathy in Catalan and English: A Comparative Study

Author: Carme Sanahuges Escoda

Format: Same as 4th year student

Supervisor: H. Curell

Abstract:

The communicative process of empathy is complex and flexible, as it greatly develops thanks to the contributions of participants in a given interaction. We will present the verbal resources to convey empathy employed in two different languages, Catalan and British English, rank them according to frequency of use and correlate them with variables mainly related to levels of satisfaction by both interactants. We will also see how perspective-taking scores seem to be unrelated to language groups, sex or age. The data presented was gathered from dyadic open role-plays, which were transcribed using Jefferson's (2004) transcription system and codified, and short post-role-play questionnaires that provided us with basic information about the participants' perception of each of the conversations.

Title: Crosslinguistic Influence in English-Spanish Bilinguals: The Effect of L2 Experience on L1 and L2 Stop Perception and Production

Author: Celia Gorba Masip

Format: 4th year student

Supervisor: J. Cebrián

Abstract:

This presentation summarizes the results of a series of experiments aimed at evaluating the effect of L2 experience on the perception and production of both L1 and L2 stops. Eight L1-English/Spanish L2-Spanish/English mirror-image groups varying in amount of L2 experience participated in the study. Perception was examined by using an identification task involving a voice onset time continuum. Production was collected by means of sentence reading tasks. Perception results showed a positive effect of L2 experience on L2 perception and a detrimental effect on L1 perception in the case of the L1-Spanish speakers, whereas no effect was observed regarding the English groups. All groups seemed to perform similarly in the L1 and in the L2. As for production, no effect of L2 experience was revealed on L1 production for any group, whereas a positive effect of experience was found on L2 voiceless stop production – i.e., the greater the amount of L2 experience, the more target-like the learners' productions were. L2 voiced stops posed a greater challenge than L2 voiceless stops. In general, learners produced significant differences between L1 and L2 stops, particularly the English learners of Spanish. Overall, it appears that L2 experience has a greater effect on the L2 than on the L1. Moreover, a more straightforward influence of L2 experience was observed in production than in perception, especially regarding voiceless stops. These results are discussed in terms of their contribution to L2 speech models on cross-linguistic influence.

Title: Metadiscourse and Generic Variations in Academic Book Reviews

Author: Juan Carlos Agudelo

Format: 4th year student

Supervisor: S. Oliver

Abstract:

Academic book reviews are unique in that they require reviewers to skilfully merge generic expectations and academic deference. Metadiscourse devices (Hyland, 2005) are essential to deal with the socio-pragmatic demands of academic evaluation. In spite of this, novice writers often lack sensitivity to the importance of these devices, and they are rarely included in academic writing practice. To remedy this limitation, this study has two main objectives. First, it describes and classifies cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary variations in the use of hedges and boosters, which convey praise and criticism in academic evaluation. Secondly, these variations are the basis for a pedagogic proposal built around the concept of metadiscourse and socio-pragmatic phenomena. For this purpose, 24 well-known Spanish, Latin American, British, and American journals in the fields of Medicine, Sociology and Applied Linguistics have been used as the source for a corpus of 120 academic book reviews published in the period spanning 2009 to 2015. After developing separate Spanish-language and English-language taxonomies, we have classified and analyzed the hedges and boosters in each book review. Thus far, our results suggest the following interpretations: 1) A comparable use of hedges to mitigate criticism across disciplines and a lower use of hedged evaluations in Spanish-language book reviews, especially in Latin American journals. 2) Cross-disciplinary differences in amplified evaluations place Medicine on one end of an imagined evaluative continuum, with the highest use of boosters, and Sociology on the other end, with the lowest use of amplified evaluative statements. Based on the variations described above, we suggest a set of guidelines for the writing of an academic book review and potential tasks which may be useful to teach pragmatic phenomena in academic evaluation both in English and Spanish as well as in the design of materials for academic genre instruction.

References

Hyland, K. (2005). *Metadiscourse: Exploring Interactions in Writing*. London: Continuum.

Title: The Effects of Linguistically-Informed Instruction on the Feature Reassembly of L2-English Articles & Noun Types

Author: Dakota J. Thomas-Wilhelm

Format: 4th year student

Supervisor: E. Pladevall

Abstract:

Recent Generative SLA (GenSLA) research has tried to account for the assembly of syntactic and semantic features of L2-English articles (Cho & Slabakova, 2014) and nouns (Choi, Ionin, & Zhu, 2018), but has done little to turn these results into practical teaching pedagogy (Whong, Gil, & Marsden, 2013a). This study seeks to fill this gap by creating a new instructional context informed by the findings and theories within GenSLA, termed linguistically-informed instruction, where teaching of L2-English articles and nouns is done through semantic universals: [\pm definite] for articles and [\pm atomic] and [\pm count] for nouns. To evaluate the effect of instruction, participants were tested pre- (T0) and post-intervention (T1, T2) using an elicited-sentence imitation task. A linear mixed effects regression model was run investigating the interaction of type of instruction and time on the accurate correction of ungrammatical stimuli with regard to L2-English articles and noun types. The model found the LING group made significant improvement from T0 to T1 but not T2. When compared to other instructional contexts, its gains were significantly greater from T0 to T1 and T2 ($p < 0.001$ for all comparisons). The significance of these results suggests that if linguistically-informed instruction were implemented in a systematic way throughout a course, it may lead to greater gains when teaching complex linguistic concepts.

References

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Choi, S. H., Ionin, T., & Zhu, Y. (2018). L1 Korean and L1 Mandarin L2 English learners' acquisition of the count/mass distinction in English. *Second Language Research*, 34(2), 147-177.

Whong, M., Gil, K.-H., & Marsden, H. (2013a). Introduction: Generative second language acquisition and language pedagogy. In M. Whong, K.-H. Gil, & H. Marsden (Eds.), *Universal Grammar and the second language classroom* (pp. 1-13). Amsterdam: Springer Netherlands.

LITERATURE

GUEST SPEAKER

Hannah Glasse and the West Indian Turtle: “Cut its throat or the head off, and let it bleed well.”

Andrew Monnickendam
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

In the fifth edition of Hannah Glasse’s best-selling recipe book, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (1755), the author decides to include some additional items, among which the most extraordinary is how ‘To dress a turtle in the West Indian Way.’ First, the recipe comprises seven paragraphs whereas the most other recipes in this and contemporary books rarely exceed one sentence. Second, addressing her book to housewives and servants who require basic instruction, starting from how to light a fire, the instructions on how to kill and prepare a turtle of sixty pounds in weight fly in the face of the book’s title and intention, to make preparation “plain and easy.”

This lecture therefore has two aims. First, to illustrate how textual analysis of one popular sub-genre reaches out to explore multiple issues such as domestic economics, professionalism and gender, social mobility, and so on. Second, to illuminate, in an amusing and instructive manner, how original research in the humanities can successfully be undertaken, pointing out both the pitfalls we should avoid and the difficult notion of drawing up conclusions.

No prior knowledge of recipes is required.

Title: The Maternal Bond: An Approach to Motherhood Through Private Writings in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

Author: Diana Erika Díez López

Format: 1st year student

Supervisor: J. Curbet

Abstract:

The first part of this presentation will be focused on the reasons why I have decided to work on maternity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; how history and philology can merge together in order to bring a better understanding of the women that preceded us, and of their world. The second point will focus on the questions I will try to solve throughout the research; namely, the following: What forms of motherhood were present during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in France and England? What were the main aspects in the performance of motherhood that we can infer from private letters and diaries? Was there a specific cultural rule governing motherhood, or we can compile a set of large exceptions to it? How many women were able to write letters to their children, and what did they tell them? I will also investigate the specific case of Madame de Sévigné as an exceptional writer and mother, and I will try to answer, through her writings, the following question: is it possible to build up “life handbooks” from the advice given by mothers to their offspring? Finally, I will focus on my theoretical approach: who are the theorists that have investigated the idea that we have of motherhood in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and what are the conclusions that they have reached on the subject? There are two important perspectives that will be discussed in the presentation; the psychological one and the biological one: several researchers like Alice Miller, Badinter, Bowlby and others will be mentioned here. Finally, I will explain the method I intend to use and the archives or sources that I will analyze in my research.

Title: The Representation of Dialectical Materialism in John Berger’s Fiction

Author: Javier Morejudo

Format: 1st year student

Supervisor: A. Monnickendam

Abstract:

Often described as an unorthodox Marxist, John Berger’s texts express the influence of dialectical materialism on their content and form without dismissing essentialism. His novels *A Painter of Our Time* (1958) and *G.* (1972) and his trilogy *Into Their Labours* (1990) explore the dialectics of art and politics, history and subjectivity and reality and fiction by appealing to essentialist notions of art, desire and labour amongst others, to link revolutionary ideals to concepts of tradition. This is reflected in the fragmented, many-sided character of his works, which follow in the footsteps of modernist artists such as James Joyce or Pablo Picasso. He sees in the dynamism with which these artists contrast the aspects of the realities they depict the most adequate artistic form to convey Karl Marx’s philosophy. Under these premisses, the aim of my thesis will be twofold: a) to situate, from a Marxist perspective, Berger’s novels in the Modernist tradition as political works intended to resist what he saw as the hegemonic ideological currents of his time; and b) to propose dialectical materialism as a literary formal feature in his fiction. For this purpose, it will be necessary to situate Berger’s novels in their historical context and evaluate the place they occupy in the Modernist tradition, and how they resist and/or reproduce what Marx argues are modes of thought derived from the capitalist mode of production; and to assess to what extent Marx’s philosophical system can be seen to structure these texts.

Title: Tarred with the nastiness of uncovered history: Interrogating Social Class in Zoë Wicomb's Fiction

Author: Laura Gutiérrez González

Format: 1st year student

Supervisor: F. Hand

Abstract:

This project seeks to analyze the ambiguous issue of South African class in the Apartheid and Post-Apartheid era, and its importance to the following formation of racialized and gendered behaviours. Although it is true that class, race and gender tend to be studied together as inseparable categories, race and gender scholars commonly study their fields as already created categories (despite their constant changes), but seldom as derivations of an earlier existing classification. As a literary based project, this paper aims to fill the gap in postcolonial literary research, which despite its focus on colonization and, due to the national fixation with race, has not adequately explored class as the influence on subsequent social categories. By focusing on the South African writer Zoë Wicomb and her oeuvre, which encapsulates both the essence and the difficulties of South African society, and taking class as the direct influence on racial and gendered formations, this study seeks to determine whether the ethos of discrimination is based that much on skin colour or gender, or on socioeconomic presumptions. Furthermore, the fact that Zoë Wicomb's fiction has not been exhaustively analyzed from this perspective benefits the originality of the topic. Nonetheless, the deciding factor for this investigation was that Wicomb's literature has been explored mainly in terms of race – as most South African literature has been – so this study would contribute to Wicomb scholarship, adding a new perspective to her writing.

Title: Humans as prey. Bodily vulnerability in science fiction and terror narratives

Author: Xiana Vázquez Bouzó

Format: 1st year student

Supervisor: S. Martín

Abstract:

My PhD project will look at narratives where humans are the prey of other beings (aliens, monsters, nonhuman animals, or other humans), specifically from the science fiction and terror genres. My aim is to study the contrast between the naturalization of the violence that happens in slaughterhouses and the commodification of sentient beings, and the disgust that stories where humans are turned into flesh produce in us. I will study questions such as: how is the relation between predator and prey constructed? What does the hunt look like? How is it intended to make us feel? What is being represented in the predation process? Is the attacker animalized as an irrational power over us, or is the human the one that is animalized to shift our position as predators in real life to one of prey in fiction to make us see the world through the eyes of the Other? How is the concept of "meat" or "flesh" depicted? My theoretical approaches will be, in a broad sense, literary studies, gender studies, and critical animal studies. I want to explore the political use of the concept of vulnerability and the power of literature and specifically science fiction to produce an estrangement in our understanding of the world, which may provide alternative directions in our relation to everything that is subject to our predation, from animals to nature itself, especially in the neoliberal time we are in.

Title: The Monstrous Masculine: Male Metamorphosis in Science Fiction Cinema from 1980 to the Present Day

Author: Josephine Swarbrick

Format: Same format as 4th year student

Supervisor: S. Martín

Abstract:

In science fiction cinema since the 1980s it has been possible to discern a trend in which male protagonists undergo a disturbing physical transformation or metamorphosis. This radical change in physical configuration entails the destabilisation of borders and binaries, thereby creating monsters. I have identified five categories of monstrous masculinity for consideration in my research: the mutant, the cyborg, the alien, the boy (coming of age) and the posthuman. For each category one or two key texts have been chosen in order to carry out a close reading utilising methodology from film studies and gender studies among others. The selected texts are: Videodrome (1983), RoboCop (1987) and RoboCop (2014), District 9 (2009), the Star Wars saga (with a focus on the trilogy completed 1999-2005), and Transcendence (2014).

Title: Starting the Journey: Tiffany Aching's Awakening as a Witch in Terry Pratchett's *The Wee Free Men*

Author: Laura Luque

Format: 2nd year student

Supervisor: S. Martín

Abstract:

Fantasy literature has incorporated the character of the witch for centuries but her portrayal as a positive female character is scarce and relatively recent. Before the reclamation of the term by second wave feminists in the 1960s, witches in fantasy (and especially in fairy tales) were typically portrayed as evil crones who embodied monstrous femininity. Nowadays, however, there are many novels featuring the witch as a benevolent character, especially in narratives intended to a young audience. The evolution of the character of the witch from an evil woman to a hero mirrors not only the genre's changing tropes and clichés but also society's, thus making room for new and positive portrayals of women. This essay aims to analyze the figure of the witch in young adult literature by focusing on the character of Tiffany Aching in *The Wee Free Men*, the first installment of the *Tiffany Aching Series* by Terry Pratchett. Even though Tiffany is only 9 years old in the first novel, she already shows signs of being a confident, feminist and powerful witch. Since the structure of the series is that of a *Bildungsroman*, Tiffany's growing mirrors and correlates to the changing conceptions of what a witch represents and how reclaiming the term is a powerful tool to challenge patriarchy's gendered conventions of femininity and womanhood.

Title: Lamenting Death in Early Shakespearean Drama

Author: Marta Maroto Bueno

Format: 3rd year student

Supervisor: Jordi Coral

Abstract:

Undeniably most traditional cultures have assigned the task of mourning to women, whose songs and passionate crying honoured the dead from time immemorial. In the sixteenth century, there was a vogue of female-voiced lyrics, chronicle-complaint poems and theatrical representations of death, which incorporated historical, pastoral and epistolary discourse. The purpose of my thesis is to show how the genre of the lament, long established as central to

early modern literature, played a formative role in the emergence of early Shakespearean drama. I will analyse the different types of lamenting discourse in Shakespeare's first tetralogy—Henry VI Part One, Two and Three and Richard III—and in Titus Andronicus, generally considered to be his first tragedy. My analysis examines the way in which a performative but originally non-dramatic kind of speech is assimilated into the plays, where it represents both an externalised, collective and ritual act and an image of the most powerful form of subjectivity. These plays contain scenes of great emotional intensity which never fail to move audiences: Margaret's traumatic torment of York, Henry's moving lament for the victims of the civil war, Richards magnificent soliloquy revealing his murderous plans and Titus' laments that echoes those of the Senecan tragedy. I shall focus specifically on the function of women's lament as an expression of individual and collective pain and as a vehicle for female bonding mourners through solidarity in a community—what has been called "sisterhood of pain". Furthermore, my analysis includes an examination of the different meanings of tears. While tears become a powerful tool of women, wailing for the nation is represented as a masculine act.

Title: Not-Writing About War When Writing About War: Diversion and Indirection in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.

Author: Andrea Sáenz

Format: 2nd year student

Supervisor: A. Monnickendam

Abstract:

Kate McLoughlin (2011) states that the representation of war is inherently *anxiogenic* since conflict resists depiction but it also demands it. Therefore, she argues, one of the literary responses to the inadequacy of language to portray such a traumatic event as war is "not-writing" about it. In *To The Lighthouse* (1927), for example, Virginia Woolf— a war victim herself— portrays the story of the Ramsay family before and after the breakout of the Great War, without any direct depiction of conflict, leaving war in the distance. In this paper, however, I will examine Woolf's particular approach to war in which the employment of several diversionary tactics may suggest a deliberate intention to overcome the anxieties of representing what had seemed so far unrepresentable. In the light of this, I believe that through fragmentation, and silence Woolf attempts to divert attention away from the main action with the inevitable result that the true target, the war, eventually becomes clear.

Title: It happened to all of us": Disclosing Sexual Abuse in Catholic Ireland in Roddy Doyle's *Smile*.

Author: Luise Schlesier

Format: 4th year student

Supervisor: D. Owen

Abstract:

Published in 2017, *Smile* is the most recent novel by Roddy Doyle, an Irish writer. It tells the story of a man who has trouble recalling his past and, most especially, the sexual abuse he suffered at the hands of one of the Christian Brothers at his school. In my paper, I discuss the difficulties that the protagonist faces in trying to disclose this abuse, and to come to terms with it, in a conservative society deeply influenced by the Catholic Church and its tenets. I also argue that the novel takes a critical stance towards the power exercised by the Church over particularly vulnerable members of society (such as the protagonists' family or, more broadly, people belonging to the lower social classes) and how it profits from their dependence on it. This is a work that relentlessly insists on bravely facing the truth of the recent past, however destructive and ugly it may appear.

Title: Writing herself out of reputation": The Intersection of Age and Gender in Anna Seward's Later Production

Author: Francesca Blanch

Format: 4th year student

Supervisor: C. Font

Abstract:

Anna Seward (1742-1809) was an English eighteenth-century intellectual, poet, and critic. Once celebrated as "th'immortal muse of Britain" (Seward 1811:147), in her lifetime Seward held a central position both within her native Lichfield's blooming cultural life and amongst a nation-wide network of intellectuals, artists, and scientists.

My thesis examines an overlooked aspect of Seward's literary corpus from an innovative critical framework, (Old) Age Studies and Gender, which contributes to Romantic Studies by placing the emphasis on the construction, evolution and representation of identity from old age as well as on the reception of elderly women writers by the reviewing press, the readership and their contemporaries. With this intersection, I examine how gender and age informed an eighteenth-century author's self-representation and reception. More particularly, I investigate how Seward, in her old age, represents herself as a woman, writer, and author; and how she is received. In order to engage with this question, I have selected a corpus that includes misattributed, unpublished and understudied material of Seward's later career, which constitutes her old age writing: Seward's "Biographical Sketch" (1796), the Benvolio debate with James Boswell (1786-93), Seward's mentorship of Robert Southey in their correspondence (1807-09), and the aims and reception of her posthumous publications (1810-11). All of the aforementioned attest to Seward's articulation of the assertion of her critical and literary authority. In this presentation, I will clarify the aforementioned, share my provisional conclusions, and suggest further lines for postdoctoral research.

Title: The Sublation of Atomism: Materialism and Protestantism in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (Books I-III)

Author: Jordi Morera

Format: 4th year student

Supervisor: J. Curbet

Abstract:

The conceptual antithesis between Protestantism and Atomism forms the basis of all the questions this dissertation explores. The rejection of spiritual reality and the demotion of the universe to mere matter were hugely controversial ideas that were reintroduced to the philosophical debate during the Early Modern Period after the fortuitous rediscovery of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* by Poggio Bracciolini, while meeting with vigorous opposition by religious thinkers and organizations. This thesis not only argues that Lucretius remains a pervasive influence throughout the first three books of *The Faerie Queene* (1590), it also re-examines the subtle ways in which Spenser enmeshes Epicurean views of the universe in his grandiose epic in a process that we can rightly call a sublation of atomism. By paying special attention to the main Lucretian episodes in the poem, and trying to establish how these renderings can be combined with Spenser's overarching Protestant perspective, I intend to elucidate how, in the poet's hands, a materialist approach to nature seems to inevitably result in spiritual and religious sublimation. By analyzing concrete narrative strategies and particular episodes, this thesis will prove that the influence of Lucretian atomism both articulates and elides Spenser's spiritual and religious perspective. With such a conception of Spenser's work in mind, the primary aim of this thesis is to build on traditional readings of the poem and integrate into them the idea that, as much as *The Faerie Queene* imitates the past and stretches into it, it also looks into the future, uncannily foreseeing the new challenges and

conflicts that would arise from the scientific and philosophical revolution that was gaining momentum during his own lifetime.

Title: I'd Like to Go Back Home": Redefining Intimacy in the Stories of Raymond Carver

Author: Clara Román Vanden Berghe

Format: 4th year student

Supervisor: L. Gimeno

Abstract:

The purpose of this dissertation is to suggest that the stories of Raymond Carver redefined intimacy in the United States by portraying its breakdown and potential reconfiguration. It will do so by analyzing a selection of stories from his four major collections, namely *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* (1976), *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981), *Cathedral* (1983) and *Elephant* (1988). Intimacy here is understood as the junction of love and domesticity. I am interested in exploring how the way the different characters that dwell in Carver's stories use the spaces they occupy to communicate to others, especially in the context of romantic relationships. For that reason, the first chapter deals with the concept of domesticity, offering a theoretical background first and then delving into the importance of the domestic in the stories of Raymond Carver. The second chapter analyzes the notion of love and focuses specifically on the language of love, i.e. the way characters in relationships communicate to one another. The final chapter will bring these two elements together by studying how domesticity informs the language of love in Carver's stories, suggesting that the home has lost its connotations of security and comfort, thus making it increasingly difficult for intimacy to thrive.

Title: Helen Maria Williams and the making of an Intellectual at the French Revolution: From Correspondent to Historian

Author: Paula Yurss

Format: 4th year student

Supervisor: C. Font

Abstract:

Helen Maria Williams (1761-1827) was a British author whose commitment to the cause of the French Revolution brought her to Paris in 1790. She eventually became a permanent resident after 1792, earning French citizenship in 1817. Williams' epistolary chronicles of the events she was witnessing - *Letters* (1790-1796), *Tour in Switzerland* (1798), *Sketches* (1801), *Narrative* (1815), *Letters* (1819) and *Souvenirs de la Révolution Française* (1827) - were addressed to a British readership. These chronicles were published at a time that witnessed different stages and models of women's engagement in political debates, such as the Women's March on Versailles (October 1789), the publication of Olympe de Gouge's *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* (1791), the ban on women's political clubs (October 1793), or the banishment from France by Napoleon of a prominent female intellectual leader, Madame de Staël, in 1809. At the same time, society moved from a model based on aristocratic values to a republican ideal, which also stimulated the debate on women's position in the newly-founded system. As a result, my presentation will answer the following research questions -that constitute the main lines of inquiry of my PhD thesis-: What was the nature of women's participation in intellectual debates? My analysis of Williams' political corpus foregrounds the need to integrate women's non-fiction of the period in mainstream intellectual debates that shaped modern conceptions of political freedom and civil liberties.

